

# **HOLY WAR**

A 600-LEVEL SEMINAR, SPRING SEMESTER 2006

Paul Stephenson, Department of History

## **Course Description**

An exploration of Holy War and the roles it played in Rome, Latin Christendom and Byzantium, with comparison to the Islamic world, up to and including the period of the Crusades. We shall dwell on definitions, exploring the articulation of notions of "Just War" and "Holy War" through a survey of sources (Greek, Arabic and Latin texts) in English translation. Our first three weeks will be devoted to a study of Biblical and Patristic (Church Fathers') attitudes to warfare, and with an attempt to understand the discrepancies and contradictions. We shall then turn to Roman attitudes to war, and explore how these complemented and contradicted Christian premises.

Our first major case study will be the emperor Constantine I "The Great," who was both a Roman and a Christian. His conversion, after he observed a Christian symbol that he believed brought him a dramatic victory, led him to promote Christianity throughout the empire. But what did he see? One representation, the labarum (a type of scepter or military standard), came to play a central role in Byzantine imperial ceremonial; another, the sign of the Cross, had many more and greater influences, not least as a symbol of Christian victory over Islam before and during the Crusades.

## **Grading**

The final grade will be based on performance in class discussions, the midterm (a paper to be prepared at home), a short oral presentation and a final examination (a second paper to be prepared at home, based on the oral presentation).

In the second part of the semester, each student will give a short oral presentation on a relevant topic, to be determined in consultation with the instructor.

Each presentation will last only ten minutes. For the first five minutes, the presenter will provide the following information:

- a) Topic and title.
- b) Historical questions to be answered.
- c) Methodology.
- d) Work completed to date.
- e) Original contribution of paper: how will it fit into a broader body of scholarship.

In addition, for a further five minutes, each student will discuss an article or chapter, outlining how it was useful in the formulation or development of his or her topic, and how it may be use or interest to others.

The final assignment will be a revision and expansion of this presentation in written form.

## **Readings**

See the full bibliography appended to this syllabus. Certain articles and chapters will be provided in class in PDF format

on a CD-ROM; others may be downloaded for free through the library website or as instructed (e.g. from <http://www.doaks.org/etexts.html>).

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#### Week 1: Introduction and Old Testament Attitudes to Warfare

Readings: The Book of Joshua, Old Testament

Introductory definitions: Byzantium, Latin Christendom, Islamicate World; Just War and Holy War etc.

#### Week 2: New Testament Attitudes to Warfare

Readings: Gospel of St. John, Book of Revelation, New Testament

C. John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War. A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics* (London, 1919; repr. New York, 1982), in the PDF version, pp. 36-53 (or further, as you must finish this book by the end of week 4)

J. Kreider, "Military service in the Church Orders" *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31 (2003): 415-42

#### Week 3: Roman Attitudes to Warfare and Victory

Readings: J. Rufus Fears, "The theology of victory at Rome: approaches and problems," in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Band II, 17.2 (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 1981), 736-826

Augustus, Res Gestae: <http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html>

#### Week 4: Patristic Attitudes to War: The Second and Third Centuries

Readings: Tertullian, Origen

C. John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War. A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics* (London, 1919; repr. New York, 1982), in the PDF version, pp. 53-174.

**Midterm will be set today.**

#### Week 5: Constantine the Great

Readings: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*

M. Shepherd, "Liturgical expressions of the Constantinian triumph," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967): 57-78

J. Straub, "Constantine as *koinos episkopos*. Tradition and innovation in the representation of the first Christian emperor's majesty," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967): 37-55

S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1981; reprinted 1990), pp. 17-61

#### Week 6: Imperial Victory in the Age of Theodosius

Readings: L. Safran, "Point of view: the Theodosian obelisk base in context," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 34 (1993): 409-35  
K. Holum, "Pulcheria's Crusade A.D. 421-22 and the ideology of imperial victory," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 18 (1977): 153-72  
K. Holum & G. Vikan, "The Trier ivory, *adventus* ceremonial, and the relics of St. Stephen," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979): 113-33; reprinted in: G. Vikan, *Sacred Images and Sacred Power in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003)  
S. Spain, "The translation of relics icon, Trier," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977): 279-304, 26 plates  
J. Wortley, "The Trier ivory reconsidered," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980): 381-94

#### Week 7: Patristic Attitudes to War, II: The Fourth and Fifth Centuries

Readings: Excerpts from Lactantius, Basil of Caesarea, and Augustine  
H. Chadwick, "The Formation of Augustine's Mind," in idem., *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 1-31

**Your Midterm Paper is due today, hence the light reading requirements.**

#### Week 8: The Age of Heraclius

Readings: Sebeos  
F. C. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' account of the sack of Jerusalem in AD 614," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 502-17. Download from JSTOR via library.  
N. Baynes, "The first campaign of Heraclius against the Persians," *English Historical Review* 19 (1904): 694-702. Download from JSTOR via the library  
C. Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the end of Antiquity," *English Historical Review* 90 (1975): 721-47. Download from JSTOR via the library  
S. Spain Alexander, "Heraclius, Byzantine imperial ideology, and the David plates," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 217-37  
Metropolitan Museum of Art activity book on "The David Plates." Download from <http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/publications/david.htm>

#### Week 9: Medieval Definitions of "Just War" and "Holy War", I: Byzantium and Islam

Readings: T. Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity: Holy War in the Byzantine Empire," *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 194-221  
G. Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian people. Holy War in Byzantium," in: A. E. Laiou & R. P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world* (Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 31-9. Download from Dumbarton Oaks.  
R. P. Mottahedeh & R. al-Sayyid, "The idea of *jih?d* in Islam before the Crusades" in: A. E. Laiou & R. P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world* (Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 23-9. Download from Dumbarton Oaks.

#### Week 10: Medieval Definitions of "Just War" and "Holy War", II: The West

**There will be no assigned reading for class this week, to give you time to formulate ideas for your final paper. We shall spend much of our time discussing these ideas.**

**Starting today, in each class three or four students will give short oral presentations on a topic selected in consultation with the instructor.**

## Week 11: Relics, Icons and the Revival of “Holy War” in the East

Readings: Byzantine Military texts (including harangues and prayers)

Averil Cameron, “The Mandylion and Byzantine iconoclasm,” in: *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, eds H. Kessler & G. Wolf (Bologna, 1998), pp. 33-54

G. Dennis, “Religious services in the Byzantine army,” in: *Eulogema. Studies in Honor of Robert Taft, SJ*, eds. E. Carr et al. (Rome, 1993), pp. 107-17

I. Kalavrezou, “Helping hands for the empire: imperial ceremonies and the cult of relics at the Byzantine court”, in: Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture*, pp. 53-79

## Week 12: Byzantine Triumphs and Victory Celebrations

Readings: Leo the Deacon;

M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge & Paris, 1986; reprinted 1990). Read as much of this as you can manage, then turn to:

C. Mango, “The triumphal way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000): 173-88, plates. Download from <http://www.doaks.org/DP54.html>

## Week 13: The First Crusade

Readings: Anna Comnena, Alexiad, Bks. 10-12.

G. Constable, "The historiography of the Crusades," in: A. E. Laiou & R. P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world* (Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 31-9. Download from Dumbarton Oaks.

Articles from K. M. Setton, ed., *History of the Crusades*, 6 vols (Madison, Wisc., 1969-89). Now available on-line.

## Week 14: Holy War in The Twelfth Century

Tyerman, C., "Were there any Crusades in the twelfth century?" *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 553-78. Download from JSTOR.

**Today you must submit your final paper.**

## Week 15: Conclusions

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## Bibliography

(Updated: November 2005)

The following works are primarily in English, except where topics are poorly covered. Students able to read French, German, or indeed Greek, will discover numerous invaluable studies (far more than in English) by pursuing references in footnotes and bibliographies. This bibliography is laughably incomplete, but represents a selection of works the instructor has read and recommends, without necessarily endorsing the views put forward.

## GENERAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Angold, M., *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204. A Political History*, 2nd edn (London & New York, 1997)

Bachrach, David S., *Religion and the Conduct of War, 300-1215* (London, 2003)

Bowersock, G. W., P. Brown & O. Grabar, *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Post-classical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999)

Herrin, J., *The Formation of Christendom* (Oxford, 1987)

Kazhdan, A. & G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, DC, 1982)

Linehan, P. & J. Nelson, eds, *The Medieval World* (London & New York, 2001)

Mango, C., ed., *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002)

Ostrogorsky, G., *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. J. Hussey. 2nd edn (Oxford, 1968)

*Oxford dictionary of Byzantium* eds. A. Kazhdan et al., 3 vols. (Oxford & New York, 1991)

Potter, David S., *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180-395* (London & New York, 2004)

Safran, L., ed., *Heaven on Earth. Art and Church in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 1998)

## BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC

Cadoux, C. John, *The Early Christian Attitude to War. A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics* (London, 1919; repr. New York, 1982)

Harnack, A., *Militia Christi. Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen, 1905)

Hunter, D., "A decade of research on early Christians and military service," *Religious Studies Review* 18/ii (1992): 87-94

Kreider, J., "Military service in the Church Orders," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31 (2003): 415-42

## ROME AND LATE ANTIQUITY

Cameron, A., *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford, 1976; reprinted 1999)

Chadwick, H., "The Formation of Augustine's Mind," in idem., *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 1-31

Conybeare, F. C., "Antiochus Strategos' account of the sack of Jerusalem in AD 614," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 502-17. Download from JSTOR via library.

Drijvers, J. W., "Heraclius and the *restitutio crucis* : notes on symbolism and ideology," in *The reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and confrontation*, eds. G. J. Reinink & B. H. Stolte, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 2 (Leuven,

2002), pp. 175-90

Fears, J. Rufus, "The theology of victory at Rome: approaches and problems," in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Band II, 17.2 (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 1981), 736-826

Fink, R. O., A. S. Hoey, and W. F. Snyder, "The *Feriale Duranum*," *Yale Classical Studies* 7 (1940), 1-222

Frolow, A. "La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse," *Revue des études byzantines* 11 (1953): 88-105

Geysen, J., "Presentations of victory on the Theodosian obelisk base," *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 47-55

Heim, F., *La théologie de la victoire de Constantin à Theodose* (Paris, 1992)

Holum, K. & G. Vikan, "The Trier ivory, *adventus* ceremonial, and the relics of St. Stephen," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979): 113-33; reprinted in: G. Vikan, *Sacred Images and Sacred Power in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003)

Holum, K., "Pulcheria's crusade A.D. 421-22 and the ideology of imperial victory," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 18 (1977): 153-74

Leader, Ruth E., "The David Plates revisited: transforming the secular in early Byzantium," *Art Bulletin* 82 (2000): 407-27

Mango, C., "Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide, II: Héraclius, S<sup>1</sup>ahrvaraz et la Vraie Croix," *Travaux et mémoires* 9 (1985): 105-18

MacCormack, S., "Change and continuity in late antiquity: the ceremony of *adventus*," *Historia* 21/iv (1972): 721-52

MacCormack, S., *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1981; reprinted 1990)

McCormick, M., *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge & Paris, 1986; reprinted 1990)

Shepherd, M., "Liturgical expressions of the Constantinian triumph," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967): 57-78

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Wander, S. H., "The Cyprus Plates: the story of David and Goliath," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 8 (1973): 89-104

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## ISLAM

Lewis, B., "The Ishmaelites and the Assassins," in: M. W. Baldwin, ed., *The first hundred years* (Madison, WI, 1969), ed. K. M. Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, I, pp. 99-132. Now made available online by the [Univ. of Wisconsin Press](#)

Mottahedeh, R. P. & R. al-Sayyid, "The idea of jihad in Islam before the Crusades" in: A. E. Laiou & R. P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world* (Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 23-9

Turner Johnson, J., *The Holy War Tradition in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Univ. Park, PA, 1997)

Watt, W. M., "Islamic conceptions of the Holy War," in: T. P. Murphy, ed., *The Holy War* (Columbus, OH, 1976), pp. 141-56

## BYZANTIUM

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Canard, M., "La guerre sainte dans le monde islamique et dans le monde chrétien," *Revue africaine* (1936): 605-23; reprinted in M. Canard, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient* (London, 1973), no. VIII

Dennis, G., "Defenders of the Christian people. Holy War in Byzantium," in: A. E. Laiou & R. P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world* (Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 31-9. [Download from Dumbarton Oaks](#).

Gagé, J., "Stavros Nikopoios . La victoire impériale dans l'empire chrétien," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 13 (1933): 370-400

Gibb, H., "The Caliphate and the Arab states," in: M. W. Baldwin, ed., *The first hundred years* (Madison, WI, 1969), ed. K. M. Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, I, pp. 84-99. Now made available online by the [Univ. of Wisconsin Press](#).

Haldon, J., *Warfare, state and society in the Byzantine world, 565-1204* (London, 1999), esp. 13-33

Kalavrezou, Ioli, "Helping hands for the empire: imperial ceremonies and the cult of relics at the Byzantine court", in: Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Court Culture*, pp. 53-79

Kolbaba, Tia, "Fighting for Christianity: Holy War in the Byzantine Empire," *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 194-221

Kolia-Dermizaki, A., *O vizantinos «ieros polemos»* [Byzantine Holy War], *Istorikes Monografies* 10 (Athens, 1991), with summary in English on pp. 394-408

Laiou, A., "On just war in Byzantium," in: *To Ellênikon. Studies in honor of Speros Vryonis, Jr.*, eds. J. Langdon et al. (New Rochelle, 1993), pp. 153-77

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(Columbus, OH, 1976), pp. 33-54

Storch, R., "The trophy and the cross," *Byzantion* 40 (1970): 105-18

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Thierry, N., "Le culte de la croix dans l'empire byzantin du VIIe siècle au Xe dans ses rapports avec guerre contre l'infidèle. Nouveaux témoignages archéologiques," *Rivista di studi bizantini e slavi* 1 (1981): 205-28

Viellefond, J., "Les pratiques religieuses dans l'armée byzantine d'après les traités militaires," *Revue des études anciennes* 37 (1935): 322-30

Viscuso, P., "Christian participation in warfare. A Byzantine view," in: *Peace and war in Byzantium. Essays in honor of George T. Dennis, S. J.*, eds. T. S. Miller & J. Nesbitt (Washington, DC, 1995), pp. 33-40

## LATINS AND CRUSADES

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Asbridge, T., *The First Crusade* (London, 2004)

Brundage, J. A., "Holy War and the medieval lawyers," in: T. P. Murphy, ed., *The Holy War* (Columbus, OH, 1976), pp. 99-140

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Bull, M., et al., *The Experience of Crusading*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2003).

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Cowdrey, H. E. J., "The genesis of the Crusades: the springs of western ideas of Holy War," in: T. P. Murphy, ed., *The Holy War* (Columbus, OH, 1976), pp. 9-32

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Mastnak, T., *Crusading peace: Christendom, the Muslim world and western political order* (Berkeley, LA and London, 2002)



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